

On the Utility of the Arts

The Ordered Universe Research Project
Collaborative Reading Seminar

A collaborative reading of Robert Grosseteste's *De artibus liberalibus*

26th May: 10.30 a.m. - 12.00 p.m. and 1.00 p.m. - 2.30 p.m.

Hatfield SCR Dining Room

All are welcome to an Ordered Universe collaborative reading seminar, which takes Grosseteste's first treatise, on the liberal arts, written in about 1200, as its focus. Places are limited, so please contact Dr Giles Gasper (g.e.m.gasper@durham.ac.uk) or Dr Sigbjørn Sønnesyn (sigbjorn.o.sonnesyn@durham.ac.uk) if you would like to attend.

The *De liberalibus artibus* sets out a thesis on the identity of arts and their role in correcting human weaknesses. Grammar, Rhetoric and Logic (the Trivium – the Three Subjects), Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy and Music (the Quadrivium – the Four Subjects), are the only arts, the only subjects which perform this role. Grosseteste explores various human activities upon which various of the arts act in a corrective manner. Amongst the arts, music and astronomy are given particular prominence in the treatise. As James McEvoy put it: 'The beauty of the *De artibus* consists in its rather breathless economy; for all its traditional flavour, it conveys a sense of excitement and discovery'.